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ABSTRACT

As part of the investigation into the achievement differentials between white and black students in Michigan, a study was done of the nature of sense of futility (SOF) at the individual student level and the relationship between the SOF correlates and self-concept ability. The sample included 2 groups of fourth and fifth graders in a random sample of 86 Michigan schools: 5,637 students in a statewide random sample and 3,360 students from schools in a predominantly black random sample. The students responded to questionnaires administered by research staff. The data were analyzed by significant variables and by stepwise, multiple regression analysis. The analysis delineated the following three correlates in the school climate and school social structure that comprised the academic SOF in individual students: (1) teachers' failure to push students for high academic achievement; (2) social pressure to avoid high grades; and (3) pure futility or a feeling of hopelessness. The finding that students in predominantly black schools are more likely than students sampled statewide to feel they have no chance in school is consistent with earlier findings. Included are four appendices containing a copy of the student questionnaire and lists of student SOF and student climate variables, other correlates of individual student futility, and factors from individual student questionnaire items for analyses of SOF (statewide sample). Also provided are 3 tables and 16 references. (JB)

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SENSE OF FUTILITY: IT'S SIGNIFICANCE AND CORRELATES AMONG MICHIGAN ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

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Sense of Futility: Its Significance and Correlates Among

Michigan Elementary Students

Conceptual Overview

Identifying variables which explain the achievement differentials between white and black students remains a major concern for researchers and educators. In the past few decades researchers have discovered a number of variables beyond those of race and socio-economic status (SES) which account for the achievement gap between schools (Coleman, 1966; Henderson, 1973; Brookover. 1979, Edmonds, 1979; Johnson, 1988; Johnson et al 1989).

The present study was stirred by consistent findings that mean sense of academic futility and sense of control accounted for significant percentages of the variance in academic achievement of students in predominantly black schools, after controlling for the affects of race and social class. Students who have a high sense of futility do not believe schools will give them a chance to succeed. Thus, they find it futile to put forth their best effort to succeed. These students are usually low achievers in school although they have high capabilities (Brookover, 1979; Coleman, 1966; Johnson, 1988; Johnson et al 1989).

Related Literature

Academic sense of futility is not widely cited in the literature. The academic sense of futility scale was developed by Schneider and Brookover (1971) and was tested in their 1973 study of school climate in 24 Michigan Public Elementary Schools. In the Equality of Educational Opportunity report Coleman et al (1966) utilized a similar construct which they referred to as "sense of control." Coleman's study found that black students had a lower sense of control than white students. More importantly, this low sense of control was a significant predictor of the variance in academic achievement in black schools. Henderson, (1973) in her review of the literature indicated that students in low SES and minority schools had a low sense of control or felt powerless in controlling their destiny and thus, found it hopeless to put forth the effort to do so. These students felt that the system, not themselves determined how much they could do and that rewards are not correlated with efforts. White middle class students were found to have a high sense of control or a feeling that they could master their own fate; that efforts and rewards were correlated (Henderson, 1973 p. 143).

The Brookover et al (1973) study results revealed that sense of academic futility explained 45% of the variance in mean achievement after the effect of SES, race and rural urban interaction were taken out. Students in black schools had significantly higher feelings of futility than those in white schools.

Brookover and his colleagues (1979) conducted another study of the school climate and social structure of randomly sampled Michigan Public Elementary Schools. An analysis of the variables revealed that school mean academic sense of futility

explained significantly more of the variance in achievement than any other variables studied. This variable was also highly correlated with SES and racial composition of the school. The proportion of explained variance was considerably higher in black schools than in white schools (69% in black schools and 26% in white schools).

Johnson, (1988) and Johnson et al, (1989) discovered that principals' and teachers' perceptions of parents' expectations for their children's education predicted significantly high proportions of the variance in academic sense of futility in black schools. No student variables entered the regression in this sample. Conversely, in predominantly white schools, principal's and teachers' perceptions of parents explained low percentages of the variance. In the latter, students' perceptions of their parents explained more of the variance in sense of futility.

The issue of self-concept and its relationship to sense of futility (sense of control) has also received attention in the literature. Some seem to assume that sense of control (or futility) and self-concept are complementary characteristics. One view has been that a high self-concept is associated with high sense of control or low futility (Klienfield, 1973). Another view holds that "self-efficacy" (self-concept) contains sources of perceived futility (Wilson, 1990 p. 30). In this model, individuals may either doubt their ability or feel confident and yet give up trying "because they believe that their efforts will ultimately be futile due to an environment that is unresponsive" (Wilson, 1990 p. 31). Self-efficacy, a term coined by Bandura (1982) and cited by Wilson (1990) was defined as "self-beliefs in one's ability to take ...action necessary to achieve goals" (p.30). This definition is commensurate with earlier definitions of self-concept (Brookover et al 1967, Brookover et al, 1979, Johnson,

1988, Johnson et al, 1989). The relationship of Bandura's construct to sense of futility is contrary to the findings of Henderson, (1973) and Brookover, et al, (1979).

Henderson's (1973) study of social-psychological and structural variables constituting school climate in 7 white and 7 black Michigan Elementary Schools revealed that sense of control and self-concept of academic ability were two entirely different constructs. Academic self-concept was defined as a students' feeling about his chances for success, while futility reflected the child's feelings as to whether it is worth the effort to try to succeed when he believes he has no chance. Her findings did reveal that social-psychological climate variables significantly affected self-concept of academic ability, and this affect was different in black and white schools. More variation was accounted for by school climate variables in white and high achieving schools than in black low achieving schools.

Brookover (1979) found negative correlations between self-concept of ability and sense of futility. Students in high SES white schools had lower self-concepts of academic ability than students in black schools (black .28, white .11), but their sense of futility was lower (higher sense of control). Conversely, students in predominantly black schools reflected a relationship in which high mean self-concept is associated with high sense of futility (lower sense of control).

Given the findings from these studies that mean students' hopelessness or sense of futility which characterize a school explained much of the variance in student achievement, this study sought to investigate the nature of sense of futility at the individual student level. It also sought to shed more light on the self-concept of ability and sense of futility debate by

examining the degree to which a relationship existed between the sense of futility correlates and self-concept of ability.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The samples were composed of two groups of fourth and fifth grade students in a random sample of 86* Michigan Elementary Schools. There were 5,637 students from 70* schools in a statewide random sample and 3,360 students from 23* schools in the predominantly black random sample. The students responded to questionnaires administered by the research staff.

Statistical Techniques

The analysis focused on three statistical procedures. First, factor analysis was employed to identify significant variables in the individual student data including those that composed the school mean sense of futility.

Second, stepwise multiple regression analysis was utilized to calculate and explain the impact these several variables identified had on individual futility factors and their effect on each other. Finally, Pearson's correlation co-efficient was used to determine the relationship between individual sense of futility factors and academic self-concept.

*Seven schools included in the black sample were also included in the statewide sample, creating a total of 86 schools.

Factor Analysis Findings and Variable Identification

The student responses in each of the samples to 42 questions were factor analyzed in a rotated order to identify the futility factors and other variables which may explain the sense of futility. This analysis of individual student data in both the statewide random sample and the sample of predominantly black schools produced 11 factors. The factors were essentially identical in both samples except for a slight variance in the rotated order. The analysis reported here is therefore based on the factor scores of students in the statewide random sample of schools.

The mean school sense of futility reported in an earlier study was composed of mean student responses to 12 items (See Appendix B). Ten of the 12 items, plus one not among the 12, factored into three clearly identified variables when the individual student responses were analyzed. They are identified as follows:

1. Social pressure to avoid high grades (Soc. Press)
2. Perceptions that teachers do not push students to do well in school (T.Fut)
3. Pure student futility (P.Fut) (similar to "sense of control")

Although these factors are intercorrelated, the factor loadings indicate clearly identifiable variables in both the state sample and the black sample. Factor analysis identified eight other variables with satisfactory loadings. These factors concerned school learning norms, perceived expectations, classroom organization, teacher directions and pressure (see Table II).

The first variable, social pressure to avoid high grades (Soc Press) was comprised of students perceptions to the questions 1) "How many students in the school make fun of or tease students who get real good grades?" 2) "How many students do not do as well as they

could do in school because they are afraid other students will not like them as much?" 3) "How many students do not do as well as they could in school because they are afraid their friends will not like them as much?"

The second variable, "perceptions that teachers do not push students to do well in school (Teacher Futility)" comprised students' responses to the questions: 1) "Of the teachers you know in this school, how many do not care if the students get bad grades?" 2) "Of the teachers you know in this school, how many do not care how hard the students work, as long as he/she passes?" 3) "Of the teachers you know in this school, how many make students work too hard?"

The final variable, pure student futility (P. Fut) comprised students' responses to the questions: 1) "people like me will not have much of a chance to do what we want in life" 2) "In this school, students like me do not have any luck." 3) "You have to be lucky to get good grades in this school" (see Appendix B). Pure futility is more specific to the school situation than Coleman's sense of control.

The items included in each factor were the same in both the state representative sample of schools and the sample of black schools. However, the factor scores differentiated somewhat between the two samples (see table I). Students in the black schools reported greater pressure not to excel, less teacher pressure or more teacher futility, and greater futility than students in the state sample of schools. Although the three individual student variables are interrelated (see table II), the factors are quite distinct, and the factor loadings do not overlap.

When the student responses to items that produced these three variables were aggregated into school mean responses they resulted in a single variable which was identified as "Student Sense of Academic Futility" (Brookover et al., 1979). The aggregated school factor analysis did not distinguish between the three dimensions of futility identified here. Disaggregating this variable permitted the investigators to identify those factors or items which more heavily influenced feelings of futility.

(Insert Table I about here)

Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis of Individual Student Futility Measures

In order to examine the correlates of the three futility variables identified above, a step wise multiple regression analysis with each of the three as the dependent variable and the other two futility variables and the eight potential contributing variables as independent ones were calculated (Appendix C). The summary of these calculations is found in Table II.

(Insert Table II about here)

Two primary observations should be made from this analysis. First, the three individual student futility variables that paralleled the school mean sense of futility contribute more to the variance of each than any of the other variables. Thus, perceived teacher futility and pure student futility explain more of the variance in social pressure to avoid high grades

than any other variables. Similarly, pure student futility and social pressure explain more of the variance in teacher futility and social pressure explains more of the students feelings of futility. This is true for the students in both the state school sample and the predominantly black school sample (see Table II).

The second primary observation is that the two independent variables explain somewhat less of the variance among the students in the black schools than in the state sample. This is reflected in the Beta weight of .339 for the state sample and .268 for the black sample in the regression of teacher futility on pure student futility and .204 and .178 for the second variable, social pressure to avoid high grades, on student futility. The two variables combined explain 15.3 percent and 10.1 percent of the variance in student pure futility respectively in the state and black sample. When each of the other two variables is the dependent variable the findings are comparable.

Several of the non-futility factors identified above contribute significantly to the variance of each of the "futility" variables, but not in a consistent order in either sample. The students perceived expectation for college (factor 3) did not contribute significantly to the variance of two variables, (teacher futility or social pressure) and only slightly, (beta .038), in the black sample to student pure futility. This finding was interesting given that similar factors were highly correlated with the school mean sense of futility composed of the three dependent variables identified here.

Clearly the students' perception of social pressure not to excel academically, their perception that teachers do not care or do not push for academic performance and the feeling that the students do not have a chance to succeed (pure futility) are very significantly

interrelated in these samples of Michigan elementary schools. The earlier finding that these combined factors explain much of the variance in mean student achievement suggest that individual student achievement may be significantly affected by those individual student futility variables.

Self Concept of Ability and Student Futility

In an earlier analysis of school mean data, the relation of school mean student sense of futility and school mean student self concept of academic ability varied greatly in the samples. In the state sample of schools, there was a negative correlation of - .430 while the black school sample indicated a positive .280. Thus in the latter, high school mean self concept was associated with a high sense of futility (Brookover et al 1979). Although it has been debated that high self concept of ability is associated with high sense of control or low futility (Coleman et al, 1966), some evidence indicates that this is not so (Henderson 1973). Since the pure futility factor identified above is similar to the Coleman concept (sense of control) with specific reference to school characteristics, the relation of individual student self concept of ability to the three futility variables identified here was further examined. The simple Pearson's Correlations for the two samples are shown in Table III.

(Insert Table III about here)

The primary finding is that there is little correlation between individual self concept of ability and any of the three futility variables. It is clear that neither perception of pressure to

avoid high grades or perception of teacher push to succeed in school contributes much to student self-concept of ability in either sample. Although the correlations are low, the relation between self concept of ability and student pure futility in the two samples may be worthy of note. In both samples (see table III), lower pure futility (sense of control) is slightly associated with lower self concept, (-.076, in the state sample and -.067 in the predominantly black schools). Thus, elementary school students with higher feeling of futility or hopelessness tend to have slightly higher self concepts of ability. This is contrary to much of the common assumption about the relationship. It must be recognize that the correlation is low, but these findings raise some questions about frequently held assumptions.

Summary and Discussion

The analyses have delineated some of the school climate and school social structure factors, which comprise academic sense of futility in individual students. These correlates are 1) teachers' failure to push students for high academic achievement, 2) social pressure to avoid high grades, and 3) pure futility or a feeling of hopelessness. A significant proportion of the variance in elementary student achievement is explained by this complex of futility factors. Although individual student achievement data was not available to the researchers, given that the complex of factors is related to mean school achievement of fourth and fifth grade students, it seems likely that individual achievement is also affected.

Sense of Futility Correlates

The high correlation of these characteristics to each other suggests that feelings of futility is a function of the school's climate and social structure (Brookover, et al 1979). The finding that students in predominantly black schools are more likely than state wide sampled students to feel they have no chance in school is consistent with earlier findings (Brookover, 1979; Johnson 1988; Johnson et al 1989). Brookover et al (1979) found that mean academic sense of futility explained high proportions of the variance in mean academic achievement of fourth and fifth grade students. The explained variance was significantly higher in predominantly black schools than other samples. Johnson (1988), Johnson et al (1989) found that principal's and teachers' perceptions of parents expectations for their children explained significantly more of the variance in sense of futility in predominantly black schools than in the statewide random sample. The results that these sense of futility characteristics are significantly more pronounced in black students suggests that schools function differently for black and white children.

The finding that teachers' failure to push students for high academic achievement affects student's feelings of futility and ultimately their achievement has important implications for educators. Part of the answer may be linked to the differential treatments of students by teachers based on the students' race and social class (Rist, 1970). Rist noted that teachers tended to place students at learning tables based on the teacher's perception of the student's status and racial backgrounds. Low income and minority children were repeatedly placed at tables farthest from the teacher and almost ignored during classroom instruction. In other instances, low income and minority students are placed in low ability groups and tracks

which dictate to them that high academic achievement is not a goal for which to strive (Henderson, 1973).

The failure of teachers to press some students for high achievement reflects students' perceptions that:

1) teachers do not care if they get bad grades,

2) teachers do not care how hard the student works, as long as he/she passes.

3) teachers do not try to make them work too hard.

Discussions with students at various intermediate (fourth and fifth grade), middle school (sixth, seventh and eighth), and high school (nine through twelve) support students' perceptions of teacher futility. On several occasions, members of the research team have asked students in predominantly black schools if they felt their teachers wanted them to achieve high grades and were willing to help them to do so. Most of the students responded "No", indicating a perception that their teachers did not care and were not interested in helping the students achieve high grades. Students' perceptions that teachers do not care affect students feelings of futility and ultimately their achievement.

Davidson and Lang (1960) noted the importance of the teacher in children's achievement. They found a high correlation between children's perceptions of their teachers feelings toward them and the children's perceptions of themselves and academic achievement. The teacher is the school official responsible for helping students acquire the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to be successful. When teachers convey to the students that high academic achievement is not important, and when students perceive that working hard and getting good grades in school are not the vehicles which will help them to be

successful in life, hopelessness takes root. These strong feelings of hopelessness or futility found among fourth and fifth grade students may help to explain the high dropout rate of black students between the intermediate and tenth grade.

The implication that social pressure to avoid high grades contributes to student's feelings of futility is not as widely cited in the literature. It does suggest that just as teacher attitudes and their failure to push for high grades affect students feelings of futility, students' perceptions of peer expectations and evaluations also affect sense of futility and academic outcomes. Henderson (1973) found that peer group expectations were a strong predictor of student success even at the elementary school level. Peers were designated as a "significant other" in children's lives along with teachers and parents.

Brookover et al, (1967) and Henderson (1973) found that teachers' perceived evaluations and practices significantly affect students' academic self-concept, which is a necessary but insufficient characteristic for achievement. Their study further revealed that perceived student press for competition (pressure to excel) and principal expectations and evaluations were predictive of student self-concept in predominantly white schools but not in predominantly black schools. This pressure to excel is perceived by the student as positive and cooperative conditions, whereby the student's perception of his own press for competition is supported by what the student perceives to be his teacher's pressure for competition. Brookover's and Henderson's findings suggest that a support system of high individual academic performance exists for white students in high achieving schools, but not in black low achieving schools. These results indicate that white students are expected to succeed, and their teachers' behavior is generally reflective of this expectation (Henderson, 1973 p.226)

Additional research is needed to identify those "social-psychological" factors unaccounted for outside the school which impact so negatively on student academic achievement. A great deal of research has investigated the "in-school" social-psychological variables related to achievement (Brookover et al, 1979; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Brophy & Good, 1970; Johnson, 1988, Rist, 1970).

The ecological study of (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986) provides a reasonable perspective on the subject. Part of the underlying theory of their research is that black students do poorly in school because they "experience ambivalence and affective dissonance in regard to academic effort and success" (p. 177). These authors further note that this is due in part to white Americans' refusal to believe and acknowledge that black Americans are intellectually capable.

Fordham & Ogbu further postulate that the attitude by whites, both in and outside the educational process, has subsequently caused black students to doubt whether it is useful to apply their intellectual capabilities in school learning. These students generally ascribe high academic success as "white people's prerogative". Thus, black students often discourage peers from striving for high academic achievement as they perceive this as "acting white" (p. 177). This kind of ambivalence, affective dissonance and social pressure, note the authors, prevent many black students from putting forth the effort necessary to perform at their level of capability on academic assignments. The result is low achievement in school by black students.

Although Fordham and Ogbu's research focused on the impact of white professionals' perceptions on the futility of blacks, other research (Washington, 1982) suggests that there is

little significant difference in white and black teachers' perceptions of black and white students. Washington found that both black and white teachers perceived white students significantly more positive than black students. Accordingly, school personnel in general should examine their perceptions about the significance of all students in the educational process.

School personnel and their beliefs about black children's academic capabilities have negatively affected students' confidence in the school as a facilitator of their success. This lack of confidence and support from the school has resulted in black children rejecting the schools' values and developing support systems within their peer group as a means of adaptation. (Fordham and Ogbu, 1986).

Self-Concept

The finding on self-concept of ability is significant for educators. The results refuted long-held perceptions about the nature of self-concept and its relationship to achievement factors (sense of control/sense of futility). The finding of this study that there is very little correlation between self-concept of academic ability and sense of academic futility has implications for school improvement. There has been an assumption that student self-concept of ability is highly associated with and/or similar to student sense of control. High sense of futility-low sense of control among students may be associated with low student achievement in spite of the students' relatively high self-concepts. High self-concept of ability is a necessary but not sufficient condition for high achievement. Students do not achieve well if they think they can't, but believing they can does not guarantee that they will achieve well.

For example, many black students with a high self-concept of ability do not achieve well in school. This is likely to be a function of their high feelings of futility in the school they attend.

EDUCATIONAL IMPORTANCE

Sense of Futility Correlates

The present research has shown that schools promote social psychological characteristics which affect feelings of futility in students attending predominantly black and statewide schools. Since earlier findings demonstrated that schools whose students have high mean sense of futility scores generally have lower mean achievement, this examination of individual student sense of futility has significant implications for student achievement. It seems very likely that students who feel social pressure not to achieve at high levels, that teachers do not care or do not press them to achieve well, and that they do not have a chance to do well in schools, will not generally achieve at high levels. The high correlation of these three factors with each other suggests that they are functions of the school. It seems very important, therefore, for schools that wish to improve achievement to focus on changing the nature of the school climate which creates these feelings of futility among students.

Certainly, schools need to evaluate their policies and procedures especially as they relate to criteria for the placement of students in various tracks and programs within the school. The placement of students in low ability groups and tracks is damaging to students' feelings of hope for success. Students in schools, even those who are early elementary, are aware of the status of their academic group placement in relation to other group placements.

The result is a perception by students in low groups and tracks that high academic success is not intended for them. Thus, their efforts are hindered. Schools should also examine the students academic norms and other social psychological characteristics which characterize the school Brookover et al (1982). More attention should be paid to how academic subjects and homework are emphasized for minority and poor children versus other non-academic programs. High standards of quality work should be communicated and demanded from all students despite their race and class. For example, all high school students should be required to take regular Algebra as a minimum. Lower-level math courses should not be an option. It is well documented that Algebra is the gate keeper to other courses necessary for college or high tech careers. High status quality work would communicate the message that the students are cared about and are expected to achieve high levels of success. Instructors must be committed to their students success in word, action , and deeds. They must be determined to arrive early and stay late if that is what their students need.

School district staff development and teacher education programs need to examine how they prepare teachers to teach children from diverse backgrounds. Opportunities should be provided for school personnel to help them understand how to incorporate racial and cultural differences into the learning process in a positive and productive manner. Frequently, students who come to school with cultural characteristics which are different from the teacher and school are excluded from participation in high status knowledge experiences. These students are too often relegated to low-level information or pushed out of school altogether due to unfounded perceptions about the students' capabilities (Rist,1970). All students regardless of race and social class need to feel that they are valued and capable in the school

environment. Students need educators who understand them, include them and demand high academic performance at all levels. This demand for high performance could reduce sense of futility and increase achievement. Push for high academic achievement may also help black children feel a stronger support for the academic norms which focus on good grades and quality performance. When black children believe that teachers care and that a quality education is worth the effort, social pressure to avoid high grades is challenged and mitigated by the school.

Self-Concept

Schools generally devote considerable time developing ways to improve the academic self-concept of students, especially black students. The perception is that black students from low socio-economic backgrounds have lower academic self-concepts than white middle class students. It is further held that this lower self-concept is a major factor explaining the lower achievement of black students. Research on academic self-concept (Brookover et al 1967-1979), has repeatedly demonstrated that students in predominantly black schools have significantly higher self-concepts than students in high achieving predominantly white schools, although their achievement is considerably lower. According to this research and the earlier studies by Brookover (1967-1979), black students believe they can achieve high academic performance in school but do not believe the school will give them a chance, thus they find it futile to put forth the effort to succeed in academic subjects. Their academic sense of futility is high (sense of control low).

Accordingly, the efforts of educators should focus on programs which help to reduce black student's feelings of hopelessness in schools. These students need to believe there is a connection between present individual performance in school and later success in life. Students need to believe the school will help them work through a system which they perceive to be insurmountable and beyond their grasp.

Appendix A

Student Questionnaire

Appendix A

Student Questionnaire

The following questions are to be answered by circling the number which best answers the question for you on the right of the answer. (pick only one answer for each question)

1. How many students in this school don't care if they get bad grades?

Almost all of the students	1
Most of the students	2
Half of the students	3
Some of the students	4
Almost none of the students	5

2. How many students in this school make fun of or tease students who get real good grades?

Almost all of the students	1
Most of the students	2
Half of the students	3
Some of the students	4
Almost none of the students	5

3. How many students don't do as well as they could do in school because they are afraid other students won't like them as much?

Almost all of the students	1
Most of the students	2
Half of the students	3
Some of the students	4
Almost none of the students	5

4. How many students don't do as well as they could do in school because they are afraid their friends won't like them as much?

Almost all of the students	1
Most of the students	2
Half of the students	3
Some of the students	4
Almost none of the students	5

5. People like me will not have much of a chance to do what we want to in life.

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Disagree	3
Strongly disagree	4

6. People like me will never do well in school even though we try hard.

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Disagree	3
Strongly disagree	4

7. I can do well in school if I work hard.

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Disagree	3
Strongly disagree	4

8. In this school, students like me don't have any luck.

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Disagree	3
Strongly disagree	4

9. You have to be lucky to get good grades in this school.

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Disagree	3
Strongly disagree	4

10. How many teachers in this school tell students to try and get better grades than their classmates?

Almost all of the students	1
Most of the students	2
Half of the students	3
Some of the students	4
Almost none of the students	5

11. Of the teachers that you know in this school, how many don't care if the students get bad grades?

Almost all of the students	1
Most of the students	2
Half of the students	3
Some of the students	4
Almost none of the students	5

12. Of the teachers that you know in this school, how many don't care how hard the student works, as long as he passes?

Almost all of the students	1
Most of the students	2
Half of the students	3
Some of the students	4
Almost none of the students	5

Appendix B

Student Sense of Academic Futility - Student Climate Variables

Three Individual "Sense of Futility" Factors

Appendix B
Student Sense of Academic Futility - Student Climate Variables

Three Individual "Sense of Futility" Factors

1. Social pressure from students to avoid high grades (Soc Press)

    a. How many students in the school make fun of or tease students who get real good grades?

    b. How many students do not do as well as they could do in school because they are afraid other students will not like them as much?

    c. How many students don't do as well as they could do in school because they are afraid their friends will not like them as much?

2. Perception that teachers do not push students to do well in school (Teacher futility)

    a. Of the teachers you know in this school, how many do not care if the students get bad grades?

    b. Of the teachers you know in this school, how many do not care how hard the student works, as long as he passes?

    c. Of the teachers you know in this school, how many make students work too hard? (not in mean sense of futility)

3. Pure Student Futility (similar to Sense of control) (P.futility)

    a. People like me will not have much of a chance to do what we want to in life.

    b. People like me will never do well in school even through we try hard.

    c. In this school, students like me do not have any luck.

    d. You have to be lucky to get good grades in this school.

Appendix C

Other Correlates of Individual Student Futility

Appendix C

Other Correlates of Individual Student Futility

1. Perception of others academic expectation and assessment (Code-Assess 1)

2. How far do you and others think you will go in school? (Code-School 2)

3. Perception of others expectations for college (Code-Expt 3)

-- (factors 4, 5, & 6 are the futility variables listed above)

7. Teachers importance of doing well in school (Code-T press 7)

8. Perception of other students efforts to learn (Code-S learn 8)

9. Extent of open classroom (Code-Classrm 9)

10. Teacher directed class (Code-T class 10)

11. Student thinks he/she can be a good student if they work hard

(Code-W hard II)

Appendix D

Factors From Individual Student Questionnaire Items For Analysis of Sense of Futility (State Wide Sample)

Appendix D

FACTORS FROM INDIVIDUAL STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS FOR ANALYSIS OF SENSE OF FUTILITY (STATE-WIDE SAMPLE)

Factor 1: Code Assess 1
Perception of others academic (grade) expectations (Parents, Teachers, Friend)
Items 59, 57, 58, 48, 37, 46 (loading 64-74)

Factor 2: Code School 2
How far do you and others think you will go in school?
Items 10, 9, 38, 56, 45 (loading 69-75)

Factor 3: Code P Expt. 3
Perceived expectations for college
Items 61, 55, 60, 54 (loading 68-74)

Factor 4: Code SocPress 4
Social pressure not to excel in grades by students
Items 22, 21, 20 (loading 68-74)

Factor 5: Code Tfutil 5
Teachers do not press (do not care)
Items 44, 43, 41, 40, (loading 59-66 or 38-66)

Factor 6: Code Pfutil 6
Pure futility (students have no chance)
Items 24, 25, 27, 28 (loadings 53-69)

Factor 7: Code TPress 6
Teacher importance of doing well (teacher press)
Items 24, 25, 27, 28 (loadings 53-69)

Factor 8: Code Slearn 5
Perception of other students efforts to learn
Items 14, 11, 19, 23, 13 (loading 62-72)

Factor 9: Code Classrm 9
Open class
Items 62, 63, (70 dropped) (loading 76-77)

Factor 10: Code TClass 10

Teacher directed class

Items 66, 64, 67 (loading 55-70)

Factor 11: Code Whard 11

Student think he/she can be good student if they work hard

Items 26, 16 (loading 50, 67)

Table I

Mean Scores of Factors Identified by Factor Analysis of Fourth Fifth Grade Student Data From Statewide Sample and Black School Sample of Schools

	Random Sample	Black Sample
1. Perc. others Acad Exp (PTF)	2.08	1.86
2. How Far they go in school	4.16	4.18
3. Perc Exp for college	3.88	3.98
4. Soc. Press not to excel	3.73	3.47*
5. Teachers do not press (don't care)	3.52	3.09*
6. Pure futility (no chance)	2.79	2.62*
7. Teacher importance of doing well	1.74	1.89
8. Perc of others efforts to learn	2.58	2.66
9. Open Classroom	3.41	2.72
10. Teacher directed class	2.52	2.34
11. Think can be good student if work hard	4.32	4.29

* Lower mean is higher pressure not to excel, less teacher push or higher futility, and higher student futility.

Table II

Regression Analysis in State and Black School Samples Using State Factors
Dependent Variable: Social Pressure to Avoid High Grades (Soc.Pres 4)

Independent Variable

		R^2		Beta	
State	**Black**	**State**	**Black**	**State**	**Black**
T. Fut 5	T. Fut 5	.088	.060	.297	.245
P. Fut 6	P. Fut 6	.127	.090	.210	.180
T. Pres 7	School 2	.130	.095	-.052	.069
Asses 1	W Hard II	.132	.097	.051	.045
W Hard II	N S*	.133	N S*	.031	NS

Alpha for Factor State .6257 Black .3447

Dependent Variable: Perception that Teachers Do Not Push Students to do well in School (Teacher Futility 5)
Independent Variable

		R^2		Beta	
State	**Black**	**State**	**Black**	**State**	**Black**
P.Fut 6	P.Fut 6	.115	.092	.338	.267
SocPres 4	SocPres 4	.158	.107	.218	.193
Asses 1	W Hard	.169	.113	.105	.079
School 2	Asses 1	.181	.117	.116	.067
T. Pres 7	T. Pres 7	.191	.121	.103	.065
T. Class	S. Learn 8	.196	.126	.066	.067
S. Learn 8	School 2	198	.128	.056	.056
W. Hard II	Clasrm 9	.200	.130	.049	.037
N S*	T. Class 10 N S	.131	N S	.038	

Alpha for Factor State .5207 Black .4329

Dependent Variable: Student Pure Futility (6)
Independent Variable

		R^2		Beta	
State	**Black**	**State**	**Black**	**State**	**Black**
T. Fut 5	T. Fut 6	.115	.072	.339	.268
SocPres 4	SocPres 4	.153	.101	.204	.178
School 2	S. Learn 8	.171	.119	.139	.134
S. Learn 8	School 2	.182	.132	.105	.134
W. Hard 11	Assess 1	.191	.136	.096	.069
Clasrm 9	P. Exp 3	.195	.137	- .067	.038
P.Expt 3	N S*	.199	N S	.059	N S
T. Clasrm 10	N S*	.201	N S	.053	N S

Alpha for Factor State .5810 Black .5244

TABLE III

CORRELATION OF INDIVIDUAL SENSE OF FUTILITY FACTORS WITH SELF CONCEPT OF ACADEMIC ABILITY*

	State Sample	Black Sample
Pressure to avoid grades (4)	.0563	-.0049
Teacher futility (no push) (5)	.0640	.0118
Pure futility (sense of control) (6)	-.0760	-.0675

*Low score is high pressure to avoid, high teacher futility and high pure futility.

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